

THE SPOTTER

THE "OFFICIAL" NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CHEERLEADING COACHES' ASSOCIATION

Well, winter has returned, but the blessing in that is that it will only last a short time at this time of year!! I hope you all had a blessed Easter, despite it being "different."

Check out Cindy's article about going "back to normal" today, then start looking toward the new seasons ahead! As I look around my house, I already see changes we have made, and I see more closely how my "empty nest" is going to look next fall, and it's not all bad.

:) ~ Kenna

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How Has Your Normal Changed and Which Parts of Normal are Worth Rushing Back To??

~ Cindy Pangburn, NW District Rep.

It is amazing how the entire world has changed so quickly!! Who knew the things we take for granted would come to a screeching halt. As I write this article I am home looking out my window at the beautiful sunshine on a weekday afternoon instead of working in my pediatric clinic. Even though I am considered an essential worker we are not seeing many patients, which in my mind is a huge blessing, as people are following the governor's recommendations and staying home!! I know life has changed drastically for everyone. Unless you live with your family, you have not been able to see them in person, so those of you with grown children and grandbabies you are only able to "see" them with Facetime, Skype or Zoom! Parents, grandparents, friends are all on the list of people we cannot see. No one could have imagined this just a few weeks ago. Covid-19 has given everyone a chance to think and realize how quickly life can change. If you are like me, I have been overthinking pretty much everything, but have decided what a great time to make some changes, hopefully for the better, in my life. How many of you had a calendar, which went from being jam packed with multiple events each and everyday, many of which, probably overlapped to looking at a completely blank calendar?? I know I did!! I can guess it is the first time in a LONG time (longer than many of you care to admit) you have free time. Wait, free time, what's that?? ☺ I know many of you may be stressed with kids at home. The teenagers are not happy they can't socialize like they want, and your little ones just don't understand why the drastic change. You may be coping with trying to teach school work you don't feel capable of teaching. While dishes and laundry pile up at an alarming rate!! And trying to maintain a budget can make one lose sleep. But, what if we looked at all the positive things.....(Continued pg. 2)

**Looking ahead to the
2020-2021 School Year?
Check out the new ICCA
Calendar! Log on to
www.iowacheercoaches.org**



Normal, Continued....

When was the last time you had family dinners every night and didn't feel rushed to get to an event?

What about movies you kept putting off watching because there just wasn't time?

Yard work, because it sure is nice to get out of the house!

Walking or riding bikes as a family ☺

There is actually time for the unending laundry (Maybe it's time to teach the kids how to run the washer and the dryer!!)

If your family likes puzzles, board games, and cards, you have time for that as well.

Bedtime stories you rush through can now be read at a leisurely pace.

How about some extra time for snuggles with your little ones?

Also, the new recipes you have wanted to try but never had the time!

How about the books you have been meaning to read? You sure have time for those now.

There are so many other things on everyone's personal list. BUT what part of normal will YOU rush back to.....There is only one person in charge of your calendar and that is YOU! What will YOU allow back on your empty schedule? Most of us have to go to work, so that's a given. Your children's activities are a must as well.

But..... before you fill up their schedules, I would suggest you chat with them and depending on their age, include them in your discussion about what they want to be a part of. This entire situation has affected them as well. Your older kids may have decided there are activities they participate in that maybe, just maybe, they no longer want to be a part of. So although we are in the midst of a history changing event, each of you can choose how you react. You can make changes for the better! You have time to evaluate what you do and when you do it. Even though life may be very stressful, now is the time to think about the changes you can make to better your life as well as your families. What parts of YOUR normal are worth rushing back to???

Goal Setting NOW!

~ Bethany Brink, At Large Rep.

Normally this time of year, I am getting together with my new cheerleaders and working on stunt progressions before the school year ends. Typically, I'm seeing much growth in the new girls and much leadership in the new set of seniors. But this year is far from normal. Being so far away from normal doesn't mean that I can't still start the process of growth in my cheerleaders. Everyone on my team, including myself, has something they can improve on, or something they want to achieve this upcoming, and that improvement can start NOW! Begin setting goals now so you and your cheerleaders have something to work for when you finally get to practice as a team again. There are many ways you can have your cheerleaders set their goals. They can set them and share them with the team through a team app that you use like Band. You can have them write them out and post them in a place where your team practices (maybe not going to work currently, but in the future). I like to use a website called futureme.org to have my cheerleaders write themselves a letter to be delivered in the future. I make them include three goals they want to achieve, what they are going to do to achieve those goals, and a date to achieve them by. They then go to the website to write their letter; I give them a date to have the letter delivered, via email. When they receive the email, they can reevaluate their goals and see if they've been doing what they need to do to achieve them. However you choose to have your team set their goals, the most important thing is that they have a plan and a timeline for achieving them. A goal without a due date is difficult to attain.

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The best advice I have ever received was to decide how you want to coach and what is important to you and stick with it. If you always coach in a way that is true to yourself, you will never be disappointed in your coaching..

~Erin Taylor, Rules Interpreter

Tryout Options (Continued)

Option 3 - Do a virtual tryout. Google will be a “friend” for this tryout as coaches will need to post material and cheerleaders will have to submit video. There are many questions to answer with this type of tryout. How are coaches sure they’ve reached all potential cheerleaders? Is there a virtual parent meeting? Do outside judges still judge or does the cheer coaching staff pick the squads? Is a Zoom or FaceTime tryout a possibility? Perhaps a program needs a YouTube channel for posting tryout material.

Advantage: The tryout will be done and allow for things to be ordered. The challenge is still getting sizes and fittings completed, but coaches can get things ordered, camp figured out, etc.

Disadvantage: Be sure this is approved by the athletic director AND administration. There are Iowa laws about inclusion in education. While we believe everyone has the internet, it just isn’t so, especially now with the loss of jobs. Be very careful and smart if you pick this method. Also, coaches are taken out of coaching and correcting bad habits before they get ingrained in muscle memory. It might take a while to correct those mistakes. Finally, some kids will do a dozen or more takes before they submit a video. Coaches have to decide if they are okay with that or not.

Option 4 -Wait to have tryouts until the start of the season. Have 2 or 3 days of tryout camp. Hold tryouts and the next day have a home cheer camp for a couple days. Coaches might be surprised at how much the cheerleaders learn by starting the year this way because the season is now. One of the best years I had in coaching was when we had our cheer camp the first 3 days of the season. It truly was a jump start because we didn’t reteach or review over and over. Kids were not required to attend the camp days, but everyone wanted to do so. (Note: again one has to be careful of the inclusion rules. How do you make sure all can afford to go to camp, because this is key to the idea? Those rules still have to apply.)

Advantage: Excitement will be on overload. The season will be off to a fast start! It would be easy to incorporate stunt progressions into the tryout camp. The home camp would have all skills including learning new material.

Disadvantage: This is another one where everyone (parents, cheerleaders and administration) needs to know the process and what is happening well ahead of time because some will be cut from the team. It will also be challenging to order shoes, etc. Talk to cheer company representatives to see if they can help or give suggestions.

If practice times are limited in the first couple of weeks of the season this method can be challenging. It will work best if the team practices every day like other sport teams do.

Welcoming a New Activities Director

~ Angie Trowbridge, Vice President with Jon

Weinrich, Shenandoah Incoming AD

Spring is a wonderful time of year - I’m enjoying longer hours of sunshine, I’m getting outside for reasonably-distanced physical activity, and there is a sort of anticipation in the air for what’s ahead...summer! Regardless of what is going on, there is hope for what’s to come. Another characteristic of springtime is that cheer coaches are in high gear, planning for the upcoming cheer year. Planning and scheduling for your team requires lots of communication with the Activities Director...but what if you’re getting a new one this summer? Such is the case for my district this year, as the district reshuffles administrators upon the resignation of two principals, moving our current AD to become the K8 Principal. Luckily, the “new” AD, Jon Weinrich, has been a part of our district for sixteen years as a teacher and coach, spending the last two as the K8 Dean of Students. I invited him to collaborate on this article to share our experiences with welcoming - count them - seven new ADs, including the brand new, the interim, the well-seasoned, and the called-out-of-retirement. For Jon, having an initial face to face meeting is important as soon as possible. “Being the basketball coach my sport didn’t start until winter, but the more successful relationships I had with AD’s started from day one. Having a group meeting can also be important but to have that face to face matters. Some of our ADs I’ve known before so that has made the transition easier.”

Here are other tips from our experiences welcoming new ADs:

Welcome and connect to the person first. This is especially important when the person is new to the district, but don’t take it for granted that a veteran to the district has connections with everyone, either. Remember that, like you, your AD is a human being. They will make mistakes! Handle their errors in the same way that you hope they handle yours.

Seek to understand. What a world it would be if we all did this with everyone! There will be decisions made that you will not like, but they also have access to more than you.

Your AD is playing a year-round balancing act among many things. They are balancing every single sport and every school activity year round, whatever weather or crises may come. In smaller districts, they’re also handling principal duties (ours is Assistant HS Principal). They may coach. They have families. You get it.

The new AD does not need a best friend, but **they do need a good communicator and problem solver.** Keep them in the loop, but give them space to do their job. A simple email that says, “I wanted you to be aware of X, but I am working on it” goes a long way showing that you respect their support, but that you are capable of handling things. This is important for achieving autonomy, earning trust, and maintaining the chain of command.

Know your sport. While they are a “jack of all trades” for the most part, being in charge of coordinating all activities, your AD relies upon you to be educated in yours. Everyone’s shared goal is to offer opportunities for students while keeping them safe.

To conclude, accept that there will be change. Jon explains it best. “Any time you are starting a new position, or you have someone in a new position, there is going to be change. That doesn’t mean there are always going to be drastic changes but people do things different ways,” he says. “I think it’s important to communicate the things that are important to you as a coach. Sometimes we assume that the person already knows everything about what is going on but that isn’t always the truth. Just having open and honest conversations will help lead to long-term, successful relationships.”